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A NEW POLICY

With this October number the *Journal of Education* published the last two years by Boston University School of Education, becomes a quarterly to be published in October, December, February, and April. The present issue contains articles similar in nature to those previously published.

Hereafter, beginning in December, each issue will be on a single topic with the whole number written by one or two authors. Topics will be concerned with both elementary and secondary schools. Each issue will also be available as a separate monograph at a price determined by the size since the number of pages will vary from topic to topic. Annual subscription is $3.00. The *Journal* is indexed in *Education Index*.

The next three numbers to be published during the school year 1955–56 will be on the subjects indicated below.

December, 1955. ***Adjusting to Individual Differences in English*** **by Olive S. Niles and Margaret J. Early.**

Wide differences in skills, abilities, and attitudes among pupils in secondary school English classes make the use of the single textbook and the uniform assignment unproductive and discouraging to both pupils and teachers. This issue deals with ways of adapting the teaching of reading, writing, and listening to these differences. Techniques of testing, materials for teaching, methods of classroom organization, and ways of stimulating genuine interests in the English program are suggested.

(Continued on inside back cover)

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Some Characteristic Differences and Similarities Among the Language Arts

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COMMUNICATION DEPENDS upon listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In terms of value to the individual, reading is not the most essential. For survival it is more important to be able to hear and speak than it is to read or write. In cases where language abilities have been destroyed by injury, rehabilitation of the auditory and speech powers is emphasized because they are more vital to man's existence and more readily restore his sense of adequacy and well-being. In the past it was not uncommon for a person to spend a lifetime quite successfully without reading or writing. Today, with all the communication devices made possible by scientific and mechanical ingenuity, it is possible for an illiterate to become fairly well-informed. There are many substitutes for reading, and there is a natural propensity for man to use those substitutes.

Natural and Acquired Skills. There are biological reasons why hearing and speaking take precedence over the graphic skills. The human body is not well adapted for reading tasks. Man was made to live and move in the wide open spaces. His eyes, his stomach, and his skeletal and muscle structure are generally built for distance vision, natural foods, and gross body activities. Mental and physical health is often seriously jeopardized when individuals grow up and continue to live in environments foreign to their biological needs. When children and adults rebel against reading and other school tasks that keep them confined to a desk over prolonged periods of time, they are not recalcitrant youth but "doing what comes naturally." Hearing and speaking might be called *natural* language skills, easy to learn and easy to do; reading and writing are *acquired* skills for which boys and girls are not, at the present stage of evolutionary development, too well adapted.

Fortunately for schools and teachers, man has social as well as biological urges that determine his mode of living. He is compelled to find out what other people have thought and done, what other people are thinking and doing, and perhaps to contribute a few ideas of his own which he hopes may please or benefit his fellow man. Consequently, he has become sold on education as a means of attaining the personal satisfaction, enrichment, and informed citizenship necessary for a better world. Since reading and writing underlie success in educational endeavors, they are essential to the survival of a democratic society, and as such they are the language skills upon which the hopes of man are built. For personal existence reading may not always be the most essential means of communication, but for social progress it becomes one of the most important.

Projector and Receptor Skills. The language arts fall into two categories: the expression or *projector* skills, speaking and writing; and the *receptor* skills, listening and reading. Listening and reading are largely interpretive functions in contrast to the creative aspects of speaking and writing. The sets of responses required for speaking or for writing are not the same as for listening or reading. The expression skills are normally geared at a slower pace; we are capable of hearing more rapidly than we can speak, and we read much faster than we can write or speak. The expression skills produce symbolic results of thinking, while the receptor skills function by using linguistic symbolism to determine trends of thought. Because the expression skills are functionally different from the receptor skills, the principles of learning also vary, and this, in turn, affects instructional procedures. For example, the methods used for teaching writing are different from those used to teach reading.

The Aural-Oral and the Visual Skills. Relationship of the language arts can be further studied by dividing them into the *silent* and the aural-oral, or *sound*, skills: listening and speaking on the one hand, and reading and writing on the other. Again different functions and different principles of learning are involved. The aural-oral skills depend on the abilities to interpret and produce sound, while the silent skills deal basically with sight in producing and interpreting printed materials. Reading and writing are similar in respect to type of imagery employed; in both cases visual imagery, or ability to revisualize word forms, is of primary importance. While the aural-oral approach is useful, it is of secondary importance in reading and spelling. The mature reader is the visual reader, and the ability to visualize a word makes for better spelling.

The opposite is true in the case of listening and speaking; here auditory and oral imagery are basic for hearing and producing ideas in sound form. Listening and speaking are the primary language facets; they are learned first and are fairly well developed before reading and writing are introduced. It is natural, therefore, that the aural-oral skills be used as springboards for teaching reading and writing, and that phonetic associations and oral expression become integral parts of the reading and writing processes. Teaching methods generally overlook the basic differences between the aural-oral and the silent language processes with the result that many people never attain maximum degree of proficiency in reading and writing.

Interdependence of the Language Skills. The degree of functional interdependence of the four facets of language is problematic. Apparently a great deal of it is due to training, because in cases of brain injury impairment of one of the language functions does not necessarily affect the others. There appears to be a closer functioning association between speech and hearing than between reading and hearing, or between reading and speech. Methods of teaching reading and writing which depend primarily on associating visual with aural and oral imagery tend to develop a strong inter-relationship of these avenues of learning. In many cases the conditioning is so strong that development of mature reading ability is impaired, as in the case of verbalism and similar difficulties. The fact that remedial teaching can overcome verbalism and

can establish the precedence of visual imagery over dependence upon oral habits of reading further indicates the effects of conditioning on the relationship of the language function. In practice the unity of the language arts is emphasized. Reading and writing are built to a large extent upon the background of verbal skills which a person already has acquired. With few exceptions, the successful reader also has developed a reasonable facility in use of the other language skills. All the skills are essential for the purposes of communication.

Similarities Among the Four Language Arts. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing have some characteristics in common. For the most part these are generalities that apply to most learning situations — a fact that should be held in mind when studying the differences. The four language arts are similar in the following respects:

1. Thinking is carried on in terms of linguistic symbolism.
2. Development depends upon associative learning powers.
3. Development depends upon capacities for mental imagery — oral, aural, visual, kinaesthetic and tactile. In other words, development depends upon *memory* of word forms, meanings, and all other language elements.
4. Development depends upon ability to synthesize these elements into total linguistic thought-patterns.
5. Development is affected by maturity, or readiness.
6. Development is affected by motivation — purpose, rapport, attitudes, environmental atmosphere, and general conditions of learning.
7. They are affected by feelings, tensions, and other forms of emotions.
8. They are affected by personal tastes, interests, and levels of appreciation.
9. They are influenced by experiential background.
10. Development depends upon opportunities for growth.
11. They are affected by familiarity with the subject.
12. They are affected by vocabulary development.
13. They are affected by ability to see relationships and organize ideas.
14. They need systematic instruction and opportunities for practice at all grade levels including pre-school through college.
15. Progress checks are needed at all grade levels.
16. Over-emphasis on technicalities such as grammar, spelling, pronunciation, etc., tends to impede general progress and efficiency.
17. They are of important value to an individual's intellectual growth — building new concepts, new relationships, etc.

Differences Between Reading and the Other Language Arts. The differences found among the language skills are more specific in nature, and are important to consider when evaluating instructional procedures. These differences suggest a reappraisement of some of the current objectives and practices in teaching the language arts. Certain fallacies appear to have resulted from confusing the psychological processes basic to each of the skills. Study the following differences for the purpose of determining what implications are significant in planning instruction.

A. Differences Between Reading and Listening[1]

1. Reading depends primarily on vision; listening depends upon hearing.
2. The silent reader *sees* then comprehends; the listener hears and comprehends.
3. *Visual* memory, or revisualizing printed word forms, is necessary for reading; memory for *sound* imagery is necessary for listening. It is interesting to consider that, while reading aphasia is commonly found among cases of brain injury, auditory aphasia (loss of ability to comprehend spoken language) does not seem to exist except in the form of rapid fatigability of the hearing processes. (4)
4. In audience reading the reader must see, comprehend, and then react by giving oral expression to the printed word forms; the listener has only to hear and comprehend.
5. Reading depends upon sight vocabulary; listening depends upon hearing vocabulary.
6. Listening powers develop earlier than reading ability. A child normally has a well developed hearing vocabulary before he begins to read, and he comprehends spoken language much earlier than he does the printed forms.
7. In the lower grades a child's hearing vocabulary is larger than his reading vocabulary. As he develops his ability to read, the difference in size between his listening and his reading vocabulary becomes less. The high-school and adult reader may develop a greater reading than hearing vocabulary.
8. Listening is a more efficient method of learning for primary and elementary children; reading increases as an efficient medium of learning at about the seventh-grade level. (1)
9. Generally, reading seems to present more comprehension difficulties than listening. Reading materials are probably at least two grade-levels below listening difficulty; tenth-grade reading materials appear to be about twelfth-grade listening material. (2) Gates says that, "if difficulties in word recognition and other mechanical matters are eliminated the child can probably understand, during reading, material about as complex or as long or as difficult as he can understand in spoken form." (3) If this is so, then reading retardation appears to be a reason why so many high-school students understand what they hear better than what they read.
10. Listening is a more efficient medium of learning for students who are below-normal in general intelligence.
11. Re-reading is possible with general materials while re-listening is possible only with recorded materials.
12. The reader can vary his speed of comprehension according to the difficulty of the material, reading purpose, and interests, while the listener has to follow the tempo of the speaker, and he cannot skim, skip, and select passages to fit his needs.
13. The reader can take time out for reflection at any point in the reading material.
14. The listener may enjoy better than the silent reader the

[1] Cf. DeBoer, and others (2), Chapter 6.

rhyme, rhythm, sound and other rhetorical effects.

15. The listener's comprehension may be affected by the speaker's inflections, enunciation, mannerisms, facial expressions, dress, personality, and general delivery.
16. The listener influences the speaker — a good audience may determine a good performance; the attitude of the reader has no affect on the quality of the book or materials he is reading.
17. The speaker-listener combination offers opportunities for a two-way discussion, questions and answers, a give-and-take development of ideas; in printed materials the author cannot answer back.

B. Differences Between Reading and Speaking

1. Speaking, like writing, is the expression of ideas; reading is comprehending ideas already expressed.
2. Speaking depends upon the ability to produce language sounds; except in oral reading, visualizing graphic symbolism is the most important factor in the reading process.
3. While reading depends primarily upon visual imagery, speaking involves basic aural and oral imagery.
4. The speaker must give attention to the phonetic elements of word forms and details of oral expression; the reader is concerned primarily with comprehending total configuration patterns of words and thought units.
5. Speech develops much earlier than reading ability.
6. The speaking vocabulary of children in the lower grades is much larger than their reading vocabulary. Among high-school students and adults, reading vocabulary is greater than speaking vocabulary.
7. The speaker must be able to organize isolated ideas; the reader has only to recognize the organization that has been done by the author.
8. Oral reading is psychologically more complex than silent reading; oral reading necessitates the additional processes of transferring visual imagery into vocal expression.
9. Speech is used in reading situations when learning to read, when verbalizing silent reading activities, when reading orally and when the context calls for aural-oral imagery such as dialogue, drama, and poetry. Speech is also used in instances when help is needed to unravel unfamiliar words or difficult material, to help concentrate on a reading passage when the mind tends to wander and as an aid to learning when an additional avenue of study is needed.

C. Differences Between Reading and Writing

1. Writing is the expression of ideas; reading is comprehending ideas already expressed.
2. Writing depends primarily upon kinaesthetic projection of ideas in the form of letters and words; although this sensory process may be to some extent a factor in oral reading, it is unnecessary for silent reading.
3. Writing demands attention to details of spelling and penmanship; reading deals with total configuration of words, phrases, and other units of thought.

4. The process of writing is much slower than reading and the vocabulary is much smaller.
5. Development of the writing vocabulary follows learning to read words. The average child finds it is more difficult to expand his writing than his reading vocabulary.
6. Attention to grammatical structure is more important in writing than in reading.
7. The writer must give conscious attention to the appearance of the written page — legibility, margins, neatness, while in reading the appearance has already been determined by the author.
8. Typing is primarily a writing rather than a reading skill.
9. Writing involves self-analysis, critical judgment of one's own thinking and techniques of expression; reading involves judgment and evaluation of other people's thinking.

Implications for Teaching. Although the language arts — speaking, listening, writing, and reading — have certain common characteristics, the nature and extent of their differences suggest that it may not be psychologically sound to expect that skill in one necessarily means skills in the others, or that improvement in one necessarily will improve the others. Many students who can speak or write well may read poorly because the set of basic responses required for speaking or writing are not the same as for reading; every English teacher knows that reading activities, in themselves, are not sufficient to produce good writers. Specific teaching techniques and skills are involved in each of the language arts. Certain of these may become helpful to more than one of the arts *when transference is definitely taught*, as in the process of seeing relationships, organizing thought units, critical evaluation, creative thinking, or punctuating according to thought units rather than blindly following rules. The teacher should be able to discriminate between the factors that should and should not be taught for transfer. Using speaking or writing as a principle method of teaching is ineffective in the upper grades because verbalism and the slow rate required of the expression skills, easily transferred to the reading situation, tend to become habits that impede development of mature reading ability.

The expression arts are psychologically more complex than reading or listening, and therefore the instructional methods should be adapted accordingly. Oral reading and writing require much more neurological activity than silent reading and listening.

Methods of teaching silent reading are different in many respects from those used in oral reading. If silent reading, in so far as it is a pattern of responses distinct from that for oral reading, has not been established during the lower grades, the transfer must be made at the higher grade levels in order that the pupils may develop mature reading skills. Because their reading habits are fundamentally oral in nature, many students who find it difficult to express themselves orally build up emotional disturbances around reading situations. Experience with remedial cases convinces us that freeing the pupil's mind from the complexities of the oral reading process is often sufficient to overcome emotional blocks and unhealthy attitudes toward the reading task. Other teaching implications might include:

1. Audience, or oral reading should be developed as a special accomplishment rather than allowed to become a part of silent reading situations.
2. Do not put pupils into oral-reading situations until they have had adequate preparation; failure in audience reading is a frustrating experience that may be reflected in general reading ability.
3. Every effort should be made to bring a student's reading comprehension up to the level of his listening and understanding ability.
4. Use the difference between a student's understanding and reading comprehension as an index of reading retardation.
5. Do not expect the same results from reading as from listening assignments; the results will vary according to individual abilities and study habits. The good students will probably profit more by reading, the poor students by listening. Usually the lazy student is a better listener than reader, although he may be below average in both.
6. When you make assignments and select materials or make out study questions and check tests, consider whether the learning situation is primarily reading, writing, listening, speaking, or combinations of the various arts.
7. Make a distinction between reading, writing, and speaking vocabulary development. Do not *require* students to pronounce or spell words they will use exclusively for silent reading or listening. It is sufficient that they derive meaning from context, general configuration, and other clues.
8. The student with tendencies toward speech defects should be taught to rely upon visual reading.
9. Instead of depending upon the usual oral and written tests, devise activities where functional uses of reading serve as comprehension check-tests.

In certain respects reading, listening, speaking, and writing are similar; however, their differences suggest that teaching methods should be designed to meet the particular psychological needs of each. When language arts are considered as natural and acquired skills, as expression and comprehension skills, and as silent and sound skills, certain differences in teaching techniques appear obvious and certain pedagogical fallacies can be avoided.

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Literature in the Language Arts Program

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Research in the language arts indicates an inherent relationship tending to unify reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The implication of this fact is that a reciprocal relation exists among the various communication areas so that growth in one area is facilitated by growth in the other areas. It, in turn, contributes to growth in all language areas.

However, integration of the language arts involves all areas of learning. Because writing, spelling, and reading are tools of learning, they naturally bear a close relation to growth in social studies, science, and mathematics — to all content fields.

On first thought literature may seem to be outside the pales of our discussion. Ordinarily we think of the language arts as being concerned with modes of communication — outgoing or expressive (writing, speaking); incoming or receptive (reading, listening). Literature, then, is not a separate area of the language arts, but merely a form of writing, or reading, depending on how you look at it. Regardless of this fact its qualities are so important in the life of the child and youth that it merits special attention.

The importance of literature in the educational program is attested by Dora V. Smith writing in the Forty-Seventh Yearbook of the N.S.S.E. in these words: "A love of reading *is one of the greatest gifts* which school or home can give to children, and a love of reading is achieved first through finding pleasure in books." This being true all areas of instruction have a responsibility in the attainment of this goal. Not only do they have a responsibility, but a real opportunity as well, for literature can give a heightened quality to familiar experiences, it can broaden and deepen understanding, it can provide an understanding of people and the current social scene.

This statement will serve as our text. With what situations and activities may literature be integrated so that young people may find pleasure in books? There are innumerable possibilities. For young children seasons of the year and holidays provide countless opportunities to read to them appropriate poetry and prose. Special events — the snowy day, the windy day, the pet at school, the construction of a new wing on the school building, the coming of the circus, the falling of leaves are used by all teachers as the motivation for vital and meaningful literature experiences.

For the older student units of work in history involving such topics as westward expansion, colonization, the industrial movement; activities in science and even mathematics spark off the reading of fiction, biography, poetry, and drama. The result is a reciprocal one, for the content being studied is clarified, enriched, and dramatized through literature. In turn good reading is motivated and becomes functional as it relates to content being studied. Integration of the kinds referred to is so much a part of good teaching everywhere that all teachers use it, at least to some extent.

In passing, however, one thing should be pointed out. The integration of literature with the content areas should never become the justification for a literature program. Though literature heightens, enriches, and dramatizes content, that is not the reason for its teaching. Literature must never become the handmaiden of the history program or the science program; nor dragged in by the heels to help celebrate Hallowe'en or the birth of Billy's baby brother; nor become the psychoanalyst's couch for developing an insight into personal problems. Though literature may make a contribution to these situations and goals, its primary value is inherent within it. It completely justifies itself if it is enjoyed and lived, if the reader responds and reacts to a well told story, if he senses the rhyme and rhythm in beautiful poetry. Whether it "correlates" or "integrates" with anything makes little difference. Edmond's *Matchlock Gun* is not integrated with history in order to dramatize and explain the colonial period, but rather the colonial period becomes the springboard for the reading of a thrilling, exciting, and well-told story.

There is one aspect of integration that I have such keen feelings about that I trust I may be pardoned if I concentrate the remainder of this paper chiefly upon it. I am referring to the integration of literature with the reading program.

Progress toward maturity in reading may be thought of as two types — growth *in* reading and growth *through* reading. Both types of growth are necessary if one is to be termed a mature reader. Growth *in* reading refers to the acquisition of those abilities and understandings that make for skillful and effective reading as an interpretative act. It is concerned with the skills and abilities of word perception, comprehension, and the like. Growth *through* reading refers to *desirable changes taking place in the child* as a result of having read. Such changes would be in attitudes, ways of thinking, overt behavior, understandings, interests, and tastes.

If one is to grow through reading it is apparent that there must be a close liaison between reading and literature — good literature — for it is only through the best that maturity comes about. The earliest acquaintance with good literature should come in the home, the preschool, and kindergarten. The three-, four-, and five-year-old can listen to and interpret nursery rhymes and jingles, poems, stories, and books that he cannot read for himself. Enjoying what he hears read aloud is a forerunner of the sheer delight that will result in interpreting what he will eventually read for himself.

From these early experiences with fine stories and poetry the child makes many kinds of growth — he increases his attention span, he grows in ability to follow complex story situations; his vocabulary grows; his own language gradually takes on the desirable patterns to which he is exposed. But more than that he is acquiring a taste for quality which is so necessary to counteract the mediocrity of the comics and the pulps.

Soon the child enters school and in due course of time is engaged in the interesting activity of learning to read. The stories he meets in his initial contact with reading should have all the qualities of the best in children's literature — plot, human

interest, familiar theme, and they should relate the truth about life. Because they do bear a fidelity to life, because there is a realistic plot, because they are rich in imagery, something "brushes off" on the young reader and he is left a better person. It appears to me this is an important matter to consider in the midst of the controversy over the use of experience stories in initial reading instruction. As valuable and useful as experience stories may be they cannot nor should they be expected to take the place of stories with plots, with vital content, and with rich imagery. Neither can rote and meaningless sentences in drill books be a substitute for a good story.

To promote a growing delight in good literature the child needs early and continuous experiences with poetry. Poetry has qualities that make of it a different medium of expression than prose. As far as children are concerned those qualities are melody, rhythm, and sensory appeal. These are the same qualities found in the dance, rhythms, music, and art. Children need poetry, and reading activities furnish almost a natural spring-board into interesting and vital experiences with it. For example, children read stories of pets. As they do the teacher reads to them Lindsay's, *The Mysterious Cat*, "Too proud to catch a mouse or rat," and Coatsworth's, *The Mouse*. They read stories of children like themselves with which may be integrated Mansfield's, *Little Brother's Secret*, and Fyleman's *The New Neighbor*. Later they read stories dealing with heroes, and they will read for themselves, Longfellow's, *Paul Revere's Ride* and Miller's, *Columbus*.

Again the fact needs to be emphasized that poetry exists for the purpose of enjoyment, of supplying rich imagery, of providing an emotional experience; not for the purpose of "enriching the unit" or of teaching manners or morals or anything else. Many of us were victims of poetry's misuse and misteaching and it was only through a later rediscovery of poetry's delight that we came to enjoy it. Poetry was something to struggle through, something to memorize, something to analyze, and something to dislike. As Arbuthnot says, "We read it with our eyes rather than with our ears." Poetry is to be lived and the reading period provides the natural place for interests to be sparked off, and for tastes to be developed.

Not only does the reading activity serve as a motivation for experiences with poetry, but for other types of literature, as well. Storybooks are a constant source of joy to youngsters. At all ages they enjoy sitting back and listening to a tale read to them. They like to talk about the story, express their feelings about it, and ask questions. So the folk story, *The Princess Who Never Laughed*, appearing in the basic reader on the 3/1 level may become the entree to the teacher's reading and interpreting *Little Freddy with His Fiddle*, the story about the spell that Freddy's magic fiddle cast on all who heard it, or *Beauty and the Beast*, another story about a wicked witch who casts a spell on a poor mortal.

But growth through reading takes place in the extension of reading interests and the enrichment of tastes that occur as the child reads independently stories of his own selection, meeting his own tastes, on his own level of achievement. Here again the literature program may be enmeshed with the basic reading pro-

gram in a most natural manner. On the sixth grade level, for example, the children may be engaged in reading a series of stories in their basic reading materials around the unit theme of "World Neighbors." Some find particularly interesting the stories of children in Greece or Russia. They want to read further. Here is a natural situation for the teacher to recommend stories in book units of other series of materials covering this particular theme. If the child is an able reader these stories should be on a mature level; if a slower reader they obviously should be on a level which he can read with ease. Some teachers call this the extension reading program, but regardless of label the basic reading program supplies the opportunity for the child to sample many different kinds of stories. As they spark off interests, as the child asks, "Are there any more stories like that one?" the teacher can then have a ready supply of stories to satisfy his needs. Thus through literature closely related to the reading program she broadens existing interests, utilizes potential interests, and arouses new interests.

But in addition to this somewhat deliberately structured program, children on all levels need an opportunity to engage in reading independently and voluntarily materials of their own choice, on their own levels, related to their own interests and needs. This voluntary reading program may have its inception in the reading program, the language program, any content area, or it may be entirely self-initiated.

Regardless of its source the child must have available a rich and ready supply of materials through the central library, classroom library, bookmobile or other. I have very keen feelings about this point, for from various sources the schools are being criticized for the low level of reading interests and tastes evidenced by both children and adults. Vociferous reading of comic books (buying, borrowing, begging, and trading), lurid stories of crime, sex, and unrealistic adventure, the pulp-wood magazines, etc., etc., is the fervent complaint. Yet in so many cases in those homes from which the complaints come barely one red cent is spent for quality reading in the way of good books and good magazines. The children merely continue to read what they read at home.

But more than that, and here is where we come in, the schools in those same communities are doing little if anything to supply through the school library a rich reading environment. A study completed at the University of Missouri a few years ago on library expenditures showed that in some schools only a bare pittance was spent on the purchase of library books in spite of the fact that the recommendation of the American Library Association is for the expenditure of $1.50 per year per pupil. (In defense of some of these schools I might add that they did have excellent basketball and football programs.)

Until the schools provide a rich literature program with a wealth of materials related to the interests and levels of the children they serve, and until the parents see the need and importance of providing a rich literary environment in the home, let no one complain about comic books or the drug store pulps. In this case as in many others we get just exactly what we pay for, or in this case, what we don't pay for.

You will understand that there are infinite ways in which a literature program — its reading, its enjoyment — may be integrated with speaking, writing, and listening (surely listening because oral interpretation of any kind has its counterpart in listening), and with science, mathematics, art, and music. Literature integrates naturally and easily. It seems today when we are beset by so many misunderstandings and confusions, that we need to take stock of our basic reading program by asking ourselves frankly what it is we are trying to accomplish through it. Is it the development of reading skills and abilities exclusively? Then we are taking a risk, as I have often said, of promoting the kind of growth that makes efficient readers of comic books. Or is it a coupling of the skills and abilities of reading with a sensitiveness to the best in writing so that through it children may come to be richer, finer, and better informed — better people because they have read?

Reading a Facet of the Literate Person

WILLIAM D. SHELDON
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I HAVE THOUGHT of the relationship of reading to a total language arts program as a complex consideration of two coordinates. If one makes a chart of the whole relationship, he can consider the levels of literacy on the one hand and the dimensions of literacy on the other.

Then with the levels of literacy defined and the dimensions of this literacy clarified, we might proceed to describe peoples in terms of our coordinates and then consider the implications of the complex for instruction.

On the one coordinate we have a range of literacy with four main points on a continuum. The literate stage being the highest, and then semi-literate, semi-illiterate, and illiterate, in descending order.

I would define the level of literacy in terms of the quality and interrelationship among the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The individual operating on the highest level of literacy would be the one achieving the maximum integration while mastering the receptive and expressive skills.

I have indicated five dimensions of literacy: Percept-concept; active-passive; persuasive-persuaded-non reacting; maturity; usage. Of course, there are many other dimensions of literacy which I shall not consider at present, such as social identification, information, aspiration level, and acceptance.

I conceive of the dimension percept-concept as being concerned with the clear reception of percepts and the eventual translation of many percepts into a conceptual framework of understanding. Within this there is the accurate continued reaction to various percepts, the eventual mastery of visual and auditory perceptions, and the gradual clarification of emerging concepts. This dimension is concerned with such a specific learning activity as the art of spelling. As words are seen and heard, the sound and form evolve from the percept level to the development of a conceptual understanding of the dynamics of the written language. For example, we have the two words "there" and "their." These are learned as identical or similar auditory percepts and then learned as discreet, or separate visual percepts. Through usage in the written form the identity of the two percepts becomes clearly separated and the concept of the differences established.

The active-passive dimension is concerned with the degree and intensity of usage of all the skills of the language. We can descend to the illiterate level, for example, and find an almost completely passive individual. His language skill (if it can be so called) is that of a non-reacting listening. His use of the listening role is passive. He does not use the speaking, reading, writing aspects. In fact, even his listening skill contributes little to his ability to understand the communications of others.

The literate person, on the other hand, operates actively as a listener, speaker, reader, and writer. His movement in the language continu-

ally develops more expression and a clearer reception, and he operates in a dynamic, ever expanding fashion.

The persuasive-persuaded-nonreacting dimension relates to the way in which the individual uses his language skills in communication with others or is affected by the use of these communication skills by other individuals. The highly literate person is neither moved completely, nor untouched by eloquence in his role as a reader or a listener, but is constantly accepting or rejecting the ideas received. He adds to these ideas or abandons them as they fit into his own framework of understanding. The persuaded person, on the other hand, receives ideas without particular challenge, and adds them to a continuously growing body of knowledge.

Maturity is that indefinable state of growth on all levels. We might call the illiterate "mature" when he has reached his level of mastery of the listening skill. However, the literate individual might be considered mature when he has reached some stage of mastery with the processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The dimension of usage refers to the degree of skill with which the individual handles language as a tool of communication. His skill of taking the language apart and putting it together gives us an opportunity of measuring his level of literacy. We might look at the members of this particular group as those on the extreme end of literate usage. You are the people, for example, who earn your living by artful speaking and writing, and among you are found the editors of the writing of others. You gain your knowledge through a discriminating listening and reading which constantly adds to your ideas, which you use in your speaking and writing. On the one hand we have the literate person using language as a tool for earning his living; on the other hand, we have the individual who has almost no use for language except when he responds to a warning cry of the traffic cop whose shout often saves the illiterate from onrushing doom.

What is the literate person? As we look across our chart, we must realize that we cannot pigeonhole the literate person, but must realize that he has a complex of skills on a continuum. For example, his mastery of writing and speaking, reading and listening vary to a considerable extent. At the one end of the literate scale we have the Winston Churchills, the Ciceros, the Thomas Jeffersons. On the other end of the literate scale we have any number of successful writers of Hollywood scripts.

In the dimension of percept-concept, the literate person masters percepts as seen in his spelling, and develops the rules of spelling as concepts to which he always responds as he writes what he has thought. He has mastered visual and auditory symbols and many concepts have emerged in a clear fashion and have been multiplied by the activity of the individual. As I listened to Dr. Durrell consider the problems of understanding why some could and others could not spell, I thought of the highly literate person with his clear percepts and his rapid and accurate formulation of concepts which always guide him in his spelling. It is obvious that Dr. Durrell has been dealing with these same ideas as they refer specifically to his study of spelling.

The literate person operates actively in the active-passive dimension. As he listens, dramatic understandings develop. He listens in technicolor. When he speaks he dramatizes and the listener can detect the color of his references. His communication is so active that he continually reduces what he says and what he writes to the level of understanding of his audience. If by some mischance, his audience expands to include some persons who cannot receive what he has to say or write, he can, if given the opportunity, rephrase and reduce what he has said or written to another level for clearer understanding. When we talk of the clarity of speech and writing, we are concerned with the great art of this highly literate person in his active role as a communicator. We should not forget to mention that his art is that of continuously synthesizing all that he has heard and read for later usage in speech and writing.

When we consider the literate person, we almost always think of him as the highly persuasive, never persuaded, always reacting individual. He uses language to persuade others to accept his ideas. He almost never accepts the ideas of others as they were spoken or written. He challenges the inferences and implications of what he has heard and read. He often does this to the dismay of a speaker or writer who has not seen either the inferences or the implications.

As far as the dimension of maturity is concerned, we know that this highly literate person matures much earlier than we have heretofore indicated. As a matter of fact, in many of the articles in today's journals, we find confusion concerning that point at which children can be taught to read and write. Only recently a nationally known authority in the field of reading indicated that perhaps the skill of reading might be taught to four- and five-year-olds without damage. Apparently we still must regard maturity as something that is felt by the observer, rather than known. We do know, however, that the differences between the highly literate person and the illiterate person are easily discernable at pre-school stage.

We have already discussed the fact that the highly literate person uses language as a means for earning his living. I think that the artful usage of language is the most clearly distinguishing mark of the highly literate person.

Implications for an Instructional Program

Because of the shortage of time, we can only consider the implications for the reading instruction program of those individuals on the literate level. We might call this individual "the gifted pupil" or the "superior reader." The teacher is ever faced with the problem of accepting the literate person's status too easily. This individual needs guidance in his language activity so that he may move to the highest level of accomplishment. One of his dangers in developing his reading skill is his literal acceptance of the written word. Because of the premium placed on speed, he often does not have the opportunity of reflecting on what he has read and making the higher level inferences that he can do with time and direction. He is often found reading on a level much lower than that of which he is capable. The teacher has a re-

sponsibility to seek out materials of a challenging nature in order to continue the expansion of this individual's ability. This gifted and literate individual often becomes what we familiarly call "the lazy and unthinking student," operating far below his level of ability.

In the area of perceptual and conceptual development, the teacher can aid this child in a refinement of his concepts and percepts rather than adding continuously to unrefined percepts and concepts. This individual has a need to clarify in a precise fashion the concepts which he adds to his understanding. He also needs to spend more time in considering the classification and application of what he has read to what he is going to do. This is the individual who needs to develop the art of summarization. He also needs to be taught how to gather material relative to a topic while weeding out material which is not relevant. He then needs to be taught to write this material in a precise and clear manner. It is very noticeable when working with executives in industry that these often gifted individuals have failed to develop the art of summarization on either a spoken or written level. It is often amazing how quickly these individuals respond to a few suggestions on the part of a teacher, but it is disconcerting when they bemoan the fact that they have operated without these skills for a number of years.

I shall close this part of my discussion with a brief consideration of what the teacher might do to develop the active nature of the language for the literate individual. This highly able individual must be taught to focus his attention on using his literate skills for productive purposes. He must create dramatic materials for the use of himself and his classmates. He needs to write, direct, and act in plays from the moment he enters the learning situation. We have been making tape recordings of the dramatic play of highly literate kindergarten children. It is very exciting to observe the effect of skillful teaching upon the four- and five-year-old as he takes the material of his environment and develops it into a dramatic form. It is with this active and literate individual that we must take the most time and give the greatest number of opportunities for speaking and using oral language in all sorts of dramatic aspects. The teacher must know that this active literate person needs to use his language continuously. He needs to write and speak and read and listen. Therefore, the teacher must give him the opportunity to do all these things from the very beginning of his education. Creativity develops with this individual as he is allowed room to move about in language. However, he can become a passive or receptive individual, using his expressive skills in a limited fashion.

We have considered, then, some dimensions on a scale of literacy in an effort to make apparent the need for examining the individuals we teach in terms of their language development. Our effort must be always in the direction of accurate identification of the individual in terms of his level of literacy and the further development of the dimensions of this literacy.

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SOME DIMENSIONS ON A SCALE OF LITERACY

Levels of Literacy	Skills	Percept-Concept	Active-Passive	Persuasive-Persuaded	Maturity	Usage	Others
Literate	W S L R	Things seen, heard and otherwise experienced become clearer as a person develops into a literate individual. As percepts are organized into concepts individuals build their conceptual guides for action. Some individuals develop clear percepts and concepts while others fail to do so.	The active individual uses language in all its dimensions. As we descend the scale of literacy we find a growing passiveness in regard to language usage. The illiterate person listens and occasionally speaks but at the extreme end of illiteracy we find a state of muteness.	The very literate individual refuses to accept what he heard and reads without question. He will add to or subtract from the ideas and reform the material for himself and others. The less literate are persuaded by what they read and hear and while they might protest, accept without reconstruction. At the extreme end we have a non-reacting individual.	People are at a mature stage in their personal language development when they accept their own status and find it accepted by others. An illiterate is mature when he accepts and is accepted for whatever degree of listening he has developed.	Our language was designed for usage. It is only effective when being used to further a closer relationship between people.	There are many other dimensions such as social-identification, information, aspiration level and acceptance. In fact the dimensions of language pervade our whole living.
Semi-Literate	W S L R						
Semi-Illiterate	S 1 R						
Illiterate	5 1						

What's Wrong With Our Teaching of Reading?

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In recent years there has been an increasing amount of outspoken criticism of the school's success in the teaching of reading. Within the past two or three years, this outcry seems to have reached a crescendo in the form of numerous articles appearing in leading newspapers and magazines, as well as several books entirely devoted to attack upon the American schools. We would like to discuss the most common of the faults pointed out by those outside the teaching profession. We believe that the criticisms are ill-founded but that they should be answered as often as they are offered. Successful teaching is based in part upon mutual understanding and respect between school personnel and parents. We must keep our parents correctly informed and combat the influence of those who are quick to magnify this conflict for personal gain. If we do not we cannot expect the support and approval of our parents and the general public.

There is another body of suggestions and criticisms emanating from within the teaching profession itself. Part of this comes from the fact that many teachers cannot answer lay criticisms and even come to believe some of this fault-finding. For example, we hear many high school teachers complaining about the apparently increasing numbers of pupils retarded in reading coming from the elementary schools. If the teacher were to think about her own experiences she could point out the ever-increasing number of children being offered a higher education. In this number is a wider range of abilities than the American school has ever accepted before. Regardless of the quality of instruction, permitting many more pupils of average and below average intelligence to attend school must result in greater numbers of children in school who show various kinds of handicaps. But many teachers have not thought out the answers to such attacks and merely repeat the criticisms. I am not suggesting that we should curtail the number of children being admitted to higher-level schools or hand-pick them the way most other countries do. I am merely pointing out that greater numbers of children inevitably results in a wider range of abilities and consequently more and more children who present difficulties in various ways.

Other criticisms come from those of us in teaching reading who are sincerely interested in self-improvement and are constantly trying to find better ways of doing the task. There are still many ideas and practices suggested by the great mass of research in reading which have not yet been adopted in the classroom. In our opinion, it would be profitable to review these two bodies of criticism — those coming from lay persons and those from within our profession. We hope to show two things by this review: first, that the

judgments passed on us are largely inaccurate and secondly, that there are possibilities of improving our methods and materials for the teaching of reading by further scientific study.

Criticisms by Laymen. The most recent and most publicized critique of the teaching of reading in American schools is contained in a book, *Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do About It.* As has been pointed out in several reviews,[1] the book contains a mass of misstatements and distortions. Its chief complaints are that present-day children are not learning to read, and that modern reading programs offer only the word method while ignoring phonics. The author decries the lack of training in letter sounds because he considers this knowledge absolutely essential for learning to read. Finally, he naively offers exercises similar to those present in American schoolbooks in the 18th century — and long since discarded as undesirable in beginning reading.

Aside from the fact that this book is more prejudiced and distorted than most such attacks, its points are fairly typical of a large group of critical writers. Like many others it concludes that present-day children are suffering from current methods of instruction and are becoming poor readers, poor spellers, and weak in independent word attack. Unfortunately, none of these claims are supported by any research studies or objective evidence of any kind.

The facts which show that our present school children read as well, if not better than, their parents and grandparents have been summarized in a number of sources. For example, Witty[2] reviewed the results of 15 comparisons of the achievement of children of today with that of years ago. In some instances, the studies were made with the very tests used by the schools of yesterday. Large-scale testing of whole city systems such as New York and Philadelphia, as well as comparisons of small groups were included. In all, more than a half million children have been compared in these studies. In only one small study were there any results found indicating superior achievement of the school children of earlier days. Thus despite changing emphasis upon oral and silent reading, and other reading skills, decreases in time allotted to reading, and many other changes in methods and materials, children of today are reading as well as those of the past. Children of today, who represent a much less careful selection of pupils, are being prepared as well as the hand-picked population of the school of the past. Moreover, if we contrast the breadth of reading as evidenced by mounting publishers' sales, children of today are much better prepared to participate in adult life. In addition, the emphasis upon intelligent, critical reading characteristic of today gives superior skill compared with the rote learning of the past. Can you picture the child of today reacting to such material as *Aesop's Fables* as his grandparents did?

The secondary complaint, that schools fail to teach phonics which is presumed to be the best approach for beginning reading, is also untrue.

[1] DeBoer, John J., "Flesch on Reading — An Editorial," *Elementary English*, April, 1955. "Johnny Can Read," *Field Service Leaflet No. 5*, University of California, Berkeley, Department of Education, Field Service Center.

[2] Witty, Paul A., "Are Children Learning to Read?" *School and Society*, 75, May 10, 1952, 289–93.

Phonics has been discarded as the basis of learning to read because many experiments show that recognition of letters is not a part of the actual act of reading. Reading is really accomplished, as motion picture and tachistoscope studies show, by a recognition of a minimum of clues such as general word shapes and anticipation of the word from the nature of the context. One does not actually perceive letters as such when reading. The shapes of the first letter or two of the word as given by the top half of the letters is sufficient in most cases. Early in this century Huey demonstrated by having a page printed in this fashion that all that is needed for fluent reading is the upper half of the words on a page. This justification of the look-say method of teaching beginning reading has been supported in many laboratory and classroom experiments, and is completely accepted by all American authorities in reading.

Only when a word is unknown and close inspection is necessary to identify it, do the actual letters and their sounds contribute to the act. Therefore, phonics is taught in our schools as an aid to the recognition of new words but only after beginning reading by the word method has been established. Phonics is taught as one of a group of aids to word recognition, useful but not infallible, since the non-phonetic nature of English often makes such analysis unprofitable. Practically every set of materials offered for teaching reading to young children follows this plan of according phonics its proper subordinate role.

Another criticism epitomized in the Flesch book is that the look-say method tends to produce wild guessing of unknown words. When the parent or relative of a small child listens to him read, the adult notices the child's dependence. When the child meets a new word, or even one that is not entirely new, he is prone to look up trustingly at the adult and wait to be told. Another tendency which upsets many adults, who have been trained by ultra-phonic or alphabetic methods, is the guessing at unknown words. These indications of lack of independent word attack are characteristic of children reading at low first grade levels. They are, however, normal performances for individuals trained to read words by word-wholes rather than letter sounds. Our research evidence proves this type of training to be superior in producing rapid initial learning. Children (and adults) learn to read faster and with more fluency with this method than any other. It has been estimated, for example, that present-day children read 17 times as much during the first year of school as their grandparents. In our opinion this single fact defeats the arguments of the critics of current methods.

An analytic approach to words is deliberately delayed since the research evidence shows that it is a deterrent to reading at this level and that the children are too immature to profit from its use. After a small core vocabulary has been learned, training in finer methods of discrimination are almost universally taught. Recognition of words by shapes or wholes supported by a half dozen ways of analysis when necessary, persists at all levels of reading. It is an inherent part of the act of reading for all persons regardless of the initial method of instruction or the eventual reading level. Even when trained by

a phonic method, children who reach any degree of fluency spontaneously employ what is actually a look-say method of word recognition. Obviously this is the true nature of the act of reading and the only methods which are completely logical are those which sooner or later promote reading by word-wholes.

Experienced parents and teachers are not disturbed by the dependence of the child, or by his frequent inaccurate guesses, or the lack of attempt to sound out words. They know that dependence is normal until analytic skills are taught, that the learning of new words is a prolonged and irregular process involving many repetitions and frequent lapses. They are also aware that phonic and other analytic skills will be taught when they are appropriate. They are not concerned when children have to be told a word many times because they know that the average child probably needs 75 or more repetitions in learning the average word.

The experienced teacher or parent is not concerned that dependence upon recognition by word-wholes, and lack of early training in phonics prevents the child from learning new words. Such teachers and parents know, and this is confirmed by recent studies of spontaneous learning of children, that children taught to read by the look-say method learn to read many words that they have not been specifically taught. Even children reading at primer level in the first grade learn many words without any instruction on these words. We think this is further proof of the facts that analytic methods of reading are not essential in beginning reading and that other methods do not handicap children in independent reading.

The sequence of steps used in teaching initial reading in our schools is not a process arrived at by chance or accident. It has involved literally hundreds of experiments on thousands of children, and more than a half century of research which thoroughly justifies every single step. These facts should be understood by every teacher and should be shared with parents and the general public to combat the misinformation being dispensed by self-appointed critics of the schools.

A final complaint of some individuals in industry is that current graduates of our schools are inferior spellers. These business people then often make the assertion that the reason for this spelling inferiority is the lack of phonics training. They too cry out against our reading methods for producing this claimed weakness. It is true that the study of phonics contributes to spelling success, for children trained in reading by this approach do show slight superiority. Do these critics expect us to discard our proven reading methods, to sacrifice the more fluent and more critical reading produced by current teaching in order to promote slightly better spelling? If so, we respectfully decline.

In the first place, there is no proof that our children are inferior to the pupils of earlier schools. As in the area of reading, comparisons of achievement on the tests of yesteryear show no inferiority of contemporary school children in a number of research studies. Our spelling curriculum has been abridged to meet the actual writing needs of adults for about 3,000 words rather than the 10,000 formerly taught. Despite this, present-day children spell creditably even when the tests are based

on the impractical 10,000 word list. The school has no intention of attempting the impossible task of teaching all children to spell all the words that industrialists have spent their lives learning to use. Trying to teach school children the spelling of technical vocabularies is certainly not a legitimate responsibility of the school.

The child of today is taught to spell the words which careful study has shown are sufficient to meet the writing needs of the average adult. Can anything be more practical than this — trying to teach children to spell the words that they will really need? Of course, not every child learns to spell all 3,000 words, but neither did his grandparents spell perfectly all the words of their longer lists. The only real difference between the spelling abilities of the children today and those of yesterday is in the number of words we attempt to teach. We have chosen to give more practice and study of a carefully selected list based on adult writing needs. We do not see any value in giving less practice on a longer list which includes many words the average adult will never use. We agree that practically every businessman can find fault with the spelling of his secretary. But is it fair to expect every secretary or typist to know how to spell the words used in any and every kind of business?

Criticisms of Professionals. Suggestions made for self-improvement of our teaching of reading touch upon the two aspects of methods and materials. For example, in the discussion of methods, junior and senior high school teachers often claim that story-type reading is over-stressed in the elementary levels and hence pupils do not learn to read effectively in the content fields. It is claimed that elementary teachers show a slavish dependence upon basal reading materials with consequent lack of instruction in varied reading situations. Another complaint from the high school is that elementary books are too simple and children never learn how to read in difficult materials.

In answer to these criticisms, elementary teachers make the rejoinder that textual materials used in high schools are too difficult for the average reader. Such texts are usually written by subject matter specialists who are concerned only with the presentation of a multitude of facts. These writers are apparently ignorant of the pupils' developmental characteristics such as reading interests and abilities. High schools and colleges are accused of emphasizing rote learning of facts rather than the pupils' understanding of relationships and generalizations and their ability to apply these to new situations, which is stressed in elementary reading. Furthermore, the elementary school cannot be expected to assume the responsibility for training pupils to read in high level, difficult texts since it never deals with such materials. Also, reading authorities point out that high school teachers assume similar reading abilities in the several content fields from a screening or general reading test. The fact that abilities differ in the various fields demonstrates the necessity of specific instruction keyed to the subject matter, a responsibility not commonly assumed by high school teachers.

Certainly these criticisms and counter criticisms within our profession must be resolved for the benefit of the

pupil. If high school reading demands more intensive and varied skills than the elementary school now attempts, then pupils must be trained in this fashion. In our opinion, both levels of teachers can contribute to higher level reading skills. Greater emphasis upon how to use reading in simple materials drawn from the content fields can begin in the intermediate grades. This does not mean mere practice in reading science or social science, as is now commonly done, but actual instruction in how to change or vary reading in different situations. The instruction must entail training in manipulating such skills as rate, degree of comprehension, some attention to technical words, outlining, summarizing, etc. This training must continue throughout the high school where each subject matter teacher will add directions in the use of reference sources, interpretation of graphic and tabular matter and detailed study of technical vocabulary and concepts. The responsibility for instruction in reading cannot be avoided at the high school and college levels by claiming that the breadth of subject matter to be covered is already too great to permit the introduction of other topics. The available research shows very clearly that the time spent in reading and vocabulary instruction is a distinct contribution to achievement in technical learnings in the content fields. Pupils given such training do significantly better on their content exams than those given only subject matter instruction.

The contradictory arguments about difficulty of materials will also be resolved, in our opinion, by this agreement to stress applied reading. There is certainly room for improvement in the instructional materials used at both levels, as we will point out later. But if pupils are better trained in using their basic reading skills, the reasons for this particular criticism will disappear. High school texts will seem to be simpler, if pupils are trained to use them more effectively. Elementary books will not seem too simple if the foundational training needed for higher level reading is begun early.

Those of us who are engaged in the training of teachers are also inclined to find fault with the practices of those we have trained. Two such criticisms are common among reading specialists. First, that reading clinicians have permitted the public to be oversold on the importance of increasing reading rate. Secondly, reading teachers have failed to clarify their aims and objectives in their own minds or to the public. Both of these situations have given rise to more lay criticism of our teaching of reading.

In saying that speed reading has been overemphasized, we cannot blame reading teachers alone. It is true that a great deal of this misleading information has come from professional writers. In the last few years there has been literally a flood of books on how to speed up your reading or how to triple your vocabulary overnight. This naive view that increase in rate represents a panacea for all reading ills has been foisted upon a very willing public who is looking for some quick way to deal with the volume of reading expected of them in modern life. The aspect which disturbs reading specialists is the extent to which this false doctrine has been supported by trained teachers. Many reading clinics have wide-scale offerings of "speed reading" courses and make extensive use

of mechanical devices intended to increase speed. Such courses are offered to large groups ranging from school children to business people.

To us, it is apparent that an approach to reading entirely on the basis of rate involves the assumption that reading is a purely mechanical act. Practically all "speed" merchants hasten to deny that they make this assumption. They defend their emphasis upon rate with the undeniable fact that most people read more slowly than they could or should. Therefore, according to these clinicians and reading teachers, these persons will benefit from some device or practice for improving their reading speed.

Let us examine this circular type of reasoning. It is true that many persons read more slowly than their potential but this condition arises from widely different causes. Any one of a half dozen difficulties such as lack of reading vocabulary, poor skill in word analysis, overemphasis upon an analytic attack, or sheer habit of reading slowly can be the major cause of slow reading. Yet the proponents of speed reading make no real distinctions as to cause and little attempt to remove the underlying bases. Groups composed of individuals of widely disparate backgrounds and varying skills are often exposed to the same mechanistic training. If fifty per cent of these show some rate gains after questionably long and expensive instruction, the clinics are highly satisfied. In our opinion, this is a deliberate denial of the existence of individual differences. Furthermore, we know of no speed training clinicians that attempt to select students on the basis of their inherent potential for gain in speed. Differences in language fluency, in speed of associative thinking, or in the ability to manipulate verbal ideas are universally recognized in intelligence testing — yet no clinic employs such diagnostic measures to segregate those students who possess real possibility for improvement. We have been experimenting for the past two years with several tests of potential for growth in rate. We have found that college age individuals vary tremendously in speed of associative thinking. Some individuals think seven times as fast as others in simple verbal concepts. But no one has yet devised a test for predicting accurately probable gain from rate instruction — a measure we believe absolutely essential to an honest rate training program. We feel that it is time to call a halt to indiscriminate speed training courses until such time as we can defend our training practices and justify our fees.

The second major criticism by reading specialists is the obvious contradiction between classroom practices and avowed objectives in reading. We see classroom teachers persist in methods which are antagonistic to the broad aims of instruction. Such practices include barber-shop circle reading (still present daily in over a third of American classrooms according to a recent survey), the overemphasis or even exclusive use of oral reading particularly in primary grades. There are also tendencies to atomize primary reading into word-by-word learning despite the evidence of transfer, and at higher levels, to depend upon oral reading for comprehension of difficult textual materials. These practices show that many teachers think of reading as an oral process, which is learned word by word. Most such teachers subscribe to the ultimate aims of fluent,

wide, and critical reading but use classroom techniques that aim toward careful, limited, analytic reading.

At the risk of repeating much that has been said better elsewhere, let us point out the major objections to the undesirable practices we have mentioned. The oral reading in turn in which listeners try to follow the leader — is probably the best type of practice in trying to read badly that has yet been devised. What actually happens is that the listeners are urged to read as poorly and as slowly as the leader. Is this conducive to fluency or enjoyment? Reading to a group may be defensible but the group should be required to follow only when the leader is a better, more fluent reader.

Primary teachers apparently have little belief in the effectiveness of other basic approaches to reading than the oral. This despite the definitive research showing the potentialities of the non-oral, the kinaesthetic and the phonic methods. No attempt is made to discover the ideal method for each child and to offer appropriate instruction. It must be acknowledged that our present look-say method is the most effective used anywhere, particularly for accomplishing the aims of wide, fluent reading. But this does not prove it is the best method for all children. We are engaged at the moment in perfecting a test for discovering the most efficient method for a group or individual. Thus far, our research indicates that many children would learn to read more readily by other methods than the oral. This fact is even more true among retarded readers who have failed to profit by the usual approach. This diagnostic approach to choice of teaching method is feasible for all primary teachers and certainly should result in reducing the proportion of reading failures in early reading.

The atomizing of primary reading into a word-by-word process is quite common. It is exemplified in the exclusive use of basal reading materials of one or two series as though only these books offered an appropriate vocabulary for initial reading. It is also shown in the emphasis upon learning every word of the basal vocabulary by re-reading and use of workbooks. These practices are first of all antagonistic to the aims of wide, fluent reading and secondly, are contrary to the available research. Soon after reaching a primer level, primary children show the ability to learn many words not specifically taught, as we have pointed out earlier in defense of the look-say method. Children are more capable of reading independently in trade and popular books appropriate to their level than many teachers believe. Our own research in contrasting the child's reading in instructional and independent reading materials shows that those reading at primer and first reader levels can, on the average, read competently in books three to six months in advance of their basal level. For children reading on higher levels, this differential is even greater. Transfer of learning of basal vocabulary to other words, development of ability to use the context, and to make successful analysis of unknown words are present much earlier than many teachers suspect. In view of these facts, there is little defense for the monotonous emphasis upon a particular series or vocabulary, or for the attitude that slow, repetitive progress is essential.

At the upper grade levels, we see oral reading used to promote compre-

hension in such fields as science and social science. When attempting to read a difficult passage or book, teachers often ask the pupil to read aloud and then attempt to answer questions. This practice is unsound on two counts, according to considerable research. First, it is detrimental to the promotion of good comprehension as a result of silent reading, which is the ultimate aim of most reading instruction. Secondly, it is clearly established that for the average child who has been exposed to silent reading instruction, comprehension is better when reading silently. We cannot expect the individual who reads aloud to show a high degree of comprehension. This practice often arises because the textbooks are actually too difficult for the reading capacities of the group. A detailed oral analysis, or what really amounts to a sight translation is resorted to. We suggest this is an undesirable solution of the situation. In keeping with our ultimate aims for reading instruction, these pupils should be given detailed instructions and practice in silent reading techniques such as finding the main idea, differentiating details from main ideas, recognizing inferences and conclusions, etc. General instruction in the skills of skimming for main ideas, scanning for details, and a planned method of reading carefully in difficult materials are also suitable. While the time spent in such reading instruction may seem to militate against subject matter achievement, this is not true. As we have pointed out earlier, training in effective methods of reading in a specific field results in improved and more rapid learning of content.

In concluding, may we suggest that it behooves classroom teachers to re-examine their daily methods in teaching reading in the light of the long range aims that have been generally accepted? Practices should be evaluated by such questions as — does this approach contribute to fluency — do these materials promote flexibility of approach to reading — do these steps contribute to training in different rates, differing degrees of comprehension, and adapting method of reading to the purpose for reading? Only when our methods and aims are in harmony and thoroughly understood by all teachers can we, as a profession, answer the criticisms of lay groups, secure in the knowledge that we are making full use of the available information and research.

Integration, Its Implications
For Instruction in Writing

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THERE ARE really three aspects of integration which need our attention in the teaching of writing, the integration of writing into the total of the language arts, the integration of writing into other areas of subject matter and interest, and the integration, if such it may be called, which nature takes care of in the interrelationship between ability to communicate and the development of personality. Writing is the last of the language arts with which children achieve independence and control and its mastery requires many years of expansion, refinement, and maturing.

Ability to write is an important need in our culture yet that ability is imperfectly achieved by a very large percentage of the population. Writing is composing meaning through the use of symbols. In reading, the symbol patterns carrying the meaning lie assembled before one's eyes and the task of the reader is to recognize the varying patterns, put meaning from his own mind and experience into them, and integrate the parts into a meaningful whole of mental pictures, concepts, action — whatever the symbol patterns call for. Writing is quite different, assembling basic elements into larger symbol units and putting them together into patterns which will arouse in the mind of the reader the concepts, pictures, and action that are in the mind of the composer. It is an intricate skill composed of many elements. There is logic in the tendency of the modern school to let reading get a good start in first grade before much emphasis is put upon writing.

Ability to push a pencil and form accurately the marks of our borrowed Latin alphabet and ability to assemble the correct selection of marks in the proper order to spell a word correctly does not make a child able to write, though he cannot do without these. The content of writing is a greater problem than either handwriting or spelling.

A child is dependent upon all of the other language arts for the content of his writing. He is dependent upon his own listening and reading together with the other sensory impressions of his first-hand experience for material with which to think and for the stuff of his writing. The younger or more immature he is the more he needs to talk what he sees, hears, reads, and otherwise experiences in order to clarify his thinking and put it into proper order and perspective with all the rest of the experience he has stowed away.

Ability to express one's self well, either orally or in writing, grows with the growth of interests and the concerns one is eager to express. The child whose background of experience is meager and who lacks keen and absorbing interests may learn to write material that is mechanically correct in form, but it will probably contain little that is worth reading. Schonell found, in his studies of backwardness in English children,

that it was almost useless to carry on remedial work in writing techniques with the normal child who was retarded in composition. Interesting the child in a variety of activities and providing more active and enriching social experiences brought better results. The ability to express grows out of a sense of power and personal worth, a sense of having something to offer that will be of interest to others. For a child it requires also sufficient sense of security and of being accepted and wanted by others to give him the confidence to put forth effort to express himself.

A number of psychiatrists and psychologists have outlined the needs of children in a sequential form that seems especially important for growth in the language arts. They have indicated that the first need of a child if he is to grow and expand intellectually is to learn to trust himself and others. Normally a child learns this in his very first year of life but if he has not learned it by fifth or sixth grade we shall get little of writing from him until he learns to have faith in the worth of his own thinking and in the respect which others will accord it. A sense of personal responsibility and the recognition that there are things no one can do for him is another essential. Initiative with conscience to guide it usually develops rapidly during a child's fourth and fifth years of life. But an elementary school child who is deficient in these elements will do little with written expression or any other form of communication. These experts in child development tell us that the elementary school years are all important for the growth of interest in industry and accomplishment. We know this is true because we see the effort children will put into doing any kind of work that is highly important to them, whether it be a paper drive, selling Girl Scout cookies, or the putting together of a model airplane. In order to get good writing we frequently need to build up a child to the point where good writing is possible for him.

There are four basic goals toward which we work in teaching writing. Certainly the first of these is *ease*. We start writing in kindergarten or first grade with the child dictating his thoughts for the teacher to write so that he can put his energies entirely into thinking and composing. We teach manuscript writing to young children so that they can reach a point fairly early at which they can write material that means something to them. We give them all the help they need when they begin to write their thoughts for themselves so that the thoughts can be put on paper in a form that children will be proud of. Our goals in the teaching of handwriting have changed somewhat but our standards are no less high. We no longer expect or want identical handwriting from all children though we do insist upon legible writing and the development of enough ease and speed to do all the writing that needs to be done and do it efficiently. We are more open to criticism today on our teaching of spelling than of any other area of the language arts. Workbooks and the filling in of blanks do not solve our problems. Our major goals in the teaching of spelling are two: to help *each child* develop an effective method of learning to spell, and to teach each child to spell instantly, accurately, and with confidence as many of the common words of English as we have

time and opportunity to teach. We try to accomplish this through our systematic day by day teaching of spelling and through the incidental spelling that is called for by the work in other subjects. Of these, the goal of an effective method of learning for each child is perhaps of greatest importance since all of us have learned far more spelling since we left the last class in which it was taught than we ever learned in spelling lessons.

Content is still the greatest problem in developing ease as many adults who can write and spell would testify. The content a child wishes to express will flow on to the paper with ease only when the child is clear about what he wants to say and has the words and mechanical skills with which to express it.

Clarity is a second major goal. Clarity in writing calls for legible handwriting, accurate spelling, well chosen words that carry meaning, and sentence structure and grammatical form which fit accepted patterns. It calls for knowledge of conventional ways of putting what one writes on the paper and putting in the traffic signals that make it possible for readers to glean one's meaning. Children can learn more about grammatical usage and conventional form through help with writing well what they want or need to write, than through any amount of filling blanks in workbooks. We do not try to achieve literary English in the common schools but we do want to weed out the illiterate forms and as many as possible of the homely forms listed by Dr. Pooley in his lists of crucial usages in his book *Teaching English Usage*.

Understanding matters of *suitability* is equally important. The type of detail-filled informal presentation which may be good in a letter to an intimate friend is completely unsuitable for a business letter. Children need to learn when and for what purposes to write as well as how to write.

Originality is a final and equally important goal. A British scholar was quoted in the press as saying that Americans in their talk use English more vividly and colorfully than any of the English speaking people, but that our writing is deadly. Too much emphasis too soon on rules for punctuation and form cause children and all too many teachers to become satisfied with writing that is correct in form even though it says nothing. We need to encourage children to write as they would talk, to be themselves in their writing, but help them to say what they wish to say clearly and correctly.

The Bronxville teachers who wrote the delightful book, *They All Want to Write* distinguish in their teaching between practical writing and personal writing. In practical writing they set high standards which the children recognize and accept and help the children to reach them. Think how much we might cut down on parental criticism if all teachers helped children to get material into good shape before taking it home. And consider also how much more children would learn if they were helped to do well instead of being assigned writing tasks to do independently and then graded on what they have achieved without help. More teaching and less rating and marking may be our cue in this as in many other aspects of teaching!

Children can be taught fairly early that doing a good piece of writing is not a one-step process. By the

time they are ready to write for themselves they can be taught to write a first draft to capture their thinking and get it transferred to paper. The next step is reading it to see if it says what they want it to say and says it as clearly and interestingly as possible. Next, they can reread it for form, catching any misspellings they recognize, making sure that it is marked for easy reading, and taking care of any incomplete and run-on sentences they find. The last step is to proofread it *with the teacher* so that she can call attention to any problems overlooked or not understood by the child. It is here, in this moment of attention to the concrete problems a child displays that real teaching takes place. The material is white-hot now and he cares about it. Tomorrow it means far less to him, whether it comes back with many or few red marks.

Research by Mata Bear indicates that run-on sentences, fragments, and garbled expression occur more frequently in Grades IV to VI than at any other level of the school system. Perhaps the burden of new ideas and information has been too great for assimilation. This may be akin to the problem of the four-year-old who stutters as he tries to pour forth his ideas. The ideas flow faster than he can get them out so that words tumble over one another. We should be grateful for growth that brings a plentiful supply of ideas but half-formed ideas, concepts that are hazy and nebulous need to be pulled out into the sunlight, looked at and talked about, until they come clear. Perhaps the best help we can give the child is to talk through the ideas with him until they are vivid and clean-cut, then ask him to read again what he has written and try to make it equally clear. Children can learn that what one writes paints a picture of himself, the quality of his thinking, and the standards he sets himself, and can learn to take pride in a well turned out product.

Learning to use self-help materials is especially important at all levels. The child can learn to clear up his own problems under guidance through the use of the dictionary, a handbook of style, a reference on usage, and through using his own textbook for reference. Children enjoy the power that comes with independence and many of them will write freely and with interest as they see their power expand.

Creative writing need not be polished in this manner. It should be accepted when the child is satisfied with it, unless it is to be read and used by other people. Even then, the child's own style should be carefully preserved and the material remain his own.

The old program of twenty minutes for language, twenty minutes for spelling, and twenty minutes for handwriting has almost disappeared. Children make normal use of writing in dealing with problems related to daily life. This does not mean that they do not stop for a few minutes of specific attention to spelling, to techniques for writing what they are trying to write, or to analysis and evaluation of weaknesses and strengths in what they are producing. It does mean that writing does not stand alone as a separate developmental task, but that it both serves and utilizes other aspects of the language arts. When one writes he must write something, so all subjects furnish content and motivation from time to time.

Integration comes easily for young

children. When they draw or paint a picture they like to have its story written underneath it. When they write a letter they want to illustrate it or to put a pretty border around the writing. A poem is as apt to be chanted or sung as to be recited. The stories they listen to suggest stories of their own that they want to tell. Social studies and science present endless opportunities and needs. If one considers the logic of use, integration presents no problems.

Throughout the publications of this Conference and of the National Council of Teachers of English, one finds emphasis on using writing in daily living in connection with the real interests and concerns of boys and girls and learning to write through writing what one needs to write and doing it increasingly well. The program should take into account both the personal needs of the learner and the requirements of present day society. Each of these criteria must be considered in relation to the other.

The final point with which this discussion started was the need for integrating writing into the life of the child. Children during their years in the elementary and secondary school are building themselves. We furnish guidance, motivation, and some of the materials with which to build, but they are the builders. We shall do better with teaching all aspects of the language arts if we put the emphasis on the correct word on the often quoted verse from scripture, "Train up the child in the way *he* should go." And we shall need to remember, as Elizabeth Gray Vining did when she taught English to a very much restricted little Japanese boy, the Emperor's son, that really teaching the language arts is opening windows on a wider world for each child and helping him to build insights and personal values as he builds his language.

A New Policy

(*Continued from inside front cover*)

February, 1956. ***Classroom Enrichment Through Pupil Specialties*** **by Donald D. Durrell and Leonard J. Savignano.**

Pupil specialties offer an effective way of providing for gifted children; they are equally important for all children. This is a report of the methods, topics, and evaluation used in a study in which 400 children in intermediate grades followed specialties as a part of their school program.

April, 1956. ***Forecasting Juvenile Delinquency*** **by William C. Kvaraceus.**

Prevention of juvenile delinquency depends on the ability of youth and family workers to identify, at an early age, those children who are prone, susceptible, or exposed to the development of undesirable behavior patterns. This issue will review two promising devices now available to professional workers concerned with the prevention and control of juvenile delinquency.

Among the topics for future issues beyond the present school year are:

Enrichment Activities in Elementary School Social Studies

The Teacher's Role in the Guidance Program

Speaking Vocabularies of Children in Kindergarten and Primary Grades

High Interest — Low Vocabulary Materials (a selected book list)

The Teaching of Grammar and Usage

Developing the Speaking Voice: Methods in the Elementary School

A Master Plan for Analysis of Recreational Facilities

Problem Solving in Elementary School Science

In making this change in policy we believe we will be serving education better through publication of practical materials too long for an article in a periodical and too short for a book.

— W. Linwood Chase